

Office of Inspector General's Report on Nutrients:

"EPA Needs to Accelerate Adoption of Numeric Nutrient Water Quality Standards".

Found at: <http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2009/20090826-09-P-0223.pdf>

OIG conducted interviews with EPA's Office of Water and Regions 4, 5, and 7 officials, and with State officials from Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, and Missouri. The report provides the following summary recommendations:

- Select significant waters of national value which need numeric nutrient water quality standards to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act.
- Set numeric nutrient water quality standards for the waters identified in the first recommendation to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act.
- Establish EPA and State accountability for adopting numeric nutrient standards for the rest of the Nation's waters.
- Establish metrics to gauge the actual progress made by the States.

Next steps: EPA is required to provide a written response to this report within 90 calendar days that includes a corrective actions plan for agreed upon actions, including milestone dates.

Nutrient Innovations Task Group:

In 2008, EPA and ASWIPCA formed a workgroup to identify and frame key nutrient issues and options on how to improve and accelerate nutrient prevention and reductions at a national level. The final report, An Urgent Call to Action – Report of the State-EPA Nutrients Innovations Task Group presents the workgroup findings.

Some of the report highlights include:

- Recognition of the impacts from nutrients to aquatic life, drinking water and recreational water quality
- Evaluation of the use of current tools such as numeric nutrient criteria, assessments and listings, urban stormwater controls, POTW permit limits and animal feedlot controls are underutilized to address nutrient issues.
- Other tools such as antidegradation, limits on discharges to impaired waters and compliance with downstream water quality standards
- Acknowledgement that "specific components of state NPS programs have been successful in addressing individual sources of nutrients, but their broader application has been undercut by the absence of a common multi-state framework of mandatory point and nonpoint source accountability.
- The need for national leadership to address nutrient concerns.

The final report is being compiled and should be available for distribution in approximately a month. (already emailed around to everyone).

Science Advisory Board:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/>

EPA's Office of Water requested the Science Advisory Board Ecological Processes and Effects Committee review the Agency's draft Technical Guidance, "Empirical Approaches for Numerical Nutrient Criteria Development". This draft guidance is intended to supplement EPA's published technical guidance for developing numeric nutrient water quality and focuses on the use of empirically-derived stressor-response relationships as the basis for developing numeric nutrient endpoints for water quality standards. Specifically, EPA is seeking advice from the Science Advisory Board (SAB) Ecological Processes and Effects Committee regarding the technical soundness of these empirical approaches as the basis for future development of numeric nutrient water quality criteria.

The SAB was charged with responding to a number of technical questions related to derivation of stressor-response relationships.

Next Steps:

SAB draft report: end of October

SAB final report: end of December

EPA response: TBD -- subject to the SAB written report

Updated/Final version of document: TBD -- subject to the SAB written report